



# THE recreation RETREAT

## National Recreation Program Update

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### WELCOME TO HQ Ryan Hartwig!

The NRM Community welcomes Ryan Hartwig as the new HQ USACE Senior Policy Advisor for Recreation and the Recreation Business Line Manager in the Natural Resources Branch of the Operations and Regulatory Division. Ryan is replacing Scott Strotman, who served in that position for many years. Ryan will be responsible for the Corps' Recreation Program (REC) Program, including coordination of the REC program with MSCs and Districts, national budget development, evaluation, and justification, policy review and updates, and strategic planning.

Ryan is joining the HQ team from the South Atlantic Division where he served as the Natural Resources Program Manager (Recreation, Environmental Stewardship, and Environmental Compliance) for the last 9 years. Ryan has 24 years of USACE experience with previous duty stations in St Paul, Mobile, Savannah, Seattle, Institute for Water Resources (IWR) and Gulf Region South (Iraq). Past positions include Park Ranger, Chief Ranger, Park Planner, Natural Resources Specialist, Park Manager, Business Line Manager and Construction Representative. Welcome Ryan, we look forward to working with you!

### NRM National Workshop Update!



The NRM National Workshop scheduled for April 2022 has been postponed to April 2023. More information to come as we move forward in planning this exciting opportunity!

**CONGRATULATIONS TO MOBILE DISTRICT'S** Mr. Allen Earhart, Ms. Miriam Fleming, Ms. Ranell Franklin, Mr. Jay Jamison, and Mr. Eric Haskell on receiving the 2021 Annual Secretary of the Army Energy and Water Management Awards, In Recognition of Accomplishments During Fiscal year 2020! *Article continued on Page 4.*

### This Issue:



NPLD  
Rec Leadership Advisory Team



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

### YOUR Thoughts

We are looking for contributors and ideas!

\*If you have a topic, success story, lesson learned, or helpful suggestion—let us know.

Send to: [Tara.J.Whitsel@usace.army.mil](mailto:Tara.J.Whitsel@usace.army.mil)

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*This online publication is produced quarterly with the purpose of providing its readers information about the USACE Recreation Program. Editorial views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. Mention of specific vendors does not constitute endorsement by the Department of the Army or any element thereof. Managing Editor: Tara Whitsel. [Tara.J.Whitsel@usace.army.mil](mailto:Tara.J.Whitsel@usace.army.mil)*

Campaign Hat Photo Credit:  
Cynthia Mitchell, USACE

# Water Safety Project Spotlight: Water Safety Partnerships Lead to Smooth Sailing at the Bay Model

*Article by: Carla Robinson, SPD Representative on National Water Safety Committee, 415-289-3022*

Water safety, boating, and amazing water recreation adventures might not immediately spring to mind when you think of a brick-and-mortar Visitor Center like the Bay Model. This unique hydraulic model built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the 1950s to test the impact of proposed projects on the San Francisco Bay-Delta sits inside a 3-acre building on the edge of Richardson Bay, drawing visitors and engineers from around the world.

With more than 280,000 gallons of water in a holding tank flowing from the Pacific Ocean through the Golden Gate into a collection of connected bays, straits, sloughs, and tidal marshlands up to the far reaches of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, the 64-year-old concrete structure is a water project all its own. If you've only seen it in pictures, you might not imagine that your visitor experience will involve stepping back in time into a cavernous space to trek thousands of steps around the 1.5-acre model of the Bay-Delta watershed, which in reality covers more than 75,000 square miles and includes the largest estuary on the west coasts of North and South America.

Once a research facility, the Model was used to simulate currents, tidal action, sediment movement, and the mixing of fresh and salt water. Engineers studied the potential effects of chemical and oil spills, the altering of shipping channels, levee failures, and bay in-filling. Today it is a public education center for learning about the Bay-Delta watershed, water as a vital resource, and the importance of water safety.

While the Bay Model promotes water safety year-round, our high-season water safety initiatives kicked off this year with Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day and National Safe Boating week in May. We fitted life jackets and set up activity and information tables in the Visitor Center gallery. Employees and volunteers at the Bay Model and San Francisco District Navigation Base Yard donned life jackets to promote the importance of wearing a life jacket when



*Photo Left: Water Safety Table in the Bay Model Visitor Center. Photo Right: Paddling in the Bay.*

around water. South Pacific Division leadership and Park Manager Chris Gallagher posed for pictures wearing their life jackets on the Bay Model waterfront, emphasizing the importance of water safety to the coastal community.

To celebrate the event, Bay Model staff and volunteers set up banners and water safety activity and information tables to reach a variety of visitors, including children, youth, adult boaters, and those interested in kayaking, paddle boarding, sailing, fishing, and clean boating on San Francisco Bay.

On busy summer days, the tables were sometimes restocked as many as 5 or 6 times for popular items, such as frisbees, life jacket whistles, floating key rings, and "Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns" fishing towels, which proved popular with sailors, kayakers, and paddle boarders. The life jacket whistles and frisbees disappeared every time a group of Sea Scouts or youth from the many summer sailing academies and adventure camps around Richardson Bay paddled over to tour the Bay Model in their life vests.

An activity table with crayons, stickers, and Bobber the Water Safety Dog coloring books welcomed some of our youngest visitors. A COVID-safe Bobber the Water Safety Dog theater with life jacket-draped chairs drew children (and sometimes parents and grandparents) to watch the Bobber the Water Safety Dog cartoons, which proved especially irresistible to anyone under the age of 12. A Bobber face-painting water safety table at the San Francisco District's annual picnic appeared to be a big hit with both kids and adults.

## Bay Model Continued

By the time you've finished learning about water safety and exploring the tidal shifts and curving waterways of the concrete structure of the Model, you'll emerge from the Visitor Center onto the Bay Model waterfront with an urge to explore this picturesque waterway on your own in real life. But, where do the Visitor Center's "real life" water recreation experiences come from, and how do we keep our visitors water safe?

Our partners Sea Trek and Call of the Sea take visitors from the Bay Model waterfront and pier out to explore the San Francisco Bay through safe kayak adventures, stand-up paddle boarding, and educational sails around Angel Island to the Golden Gate and beyond. These safe water recreation and educational opportunities are supported and enhanced by the commitment to safety of the larger maritime community of Richardson Bay.

Sea Trek, the first commercial sea kayaking business in California, has a commitment to safety in its adventure experiences, which include kayak treks, stand up paddle boarding, full moon paddles, trips to Angel Island, and even a Golden Gate paddle. Visitors receive a comprehensive water safety training and life jacket fitting for each outing. Because they provide every visitor with a fitted life jacket, the Bay Model does not need to provide life jacket loaner stations. The water recreation outfitter also offers a sea kayak rescue class, as well as monthly CPR and Wilderness First Responder trainings to the public.

Call of the Sea is an educational nonprofit that connects people to the sea using its teaching platforms—the 82' schooner *Seaward* and the 132' *Matthew Turner* brigantine tall ship. Some of the most enthusiastic students are children and youth who sign up for the popular summer adventure camps and educational sails focusing on marine sciences, nautical heritage, the ocean environment, ship building, and how to be safe at sea. Each child receives a life-jacket fitting and boat safety training before embarking on the sailboat or tall ship. Call of the Sea also performs regular Coast Guard safety drills to keep the vessels seaworthy and the passengers safe.

In the same way our partners provide experiential water recreation and educational opportunities for our visitors, they also amplify the water safety message like the ripples of an outgoing tide.

During the past year, the Bay Model's water safety contacts reached more than 4,552 visitors and 1,919 social media contacts, which felt like quite a victory given the COVID-19 limitations on indoor gatherings and events. For the sailing season, Call of the Sea made 4,959 water safety contacts for seagoing visitors, and the Sea Trek team provided 28,950 water safety trainings and talks for water recreators throughout the entire year.

The unified commitment to safety and the relationships among USACE staff, Bay Model partners, volunteers, visitors, maritime community organizations, and first responder agencies, such as the Sausalito Police Department and Marin County Fire Department, are a key reason our site has no water-related fatalities. Our team hopes to build on these outreach experiences in years to come as part of our mission to keep the public safe on the water.



*Photo Top: Wear a Life Jacket to Work Day. Photo Bottom: Sea Trek Paddling Demonstration*

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT!

**1 Share Your Story.** Earlier this year, Recreation.gov ran a 'Share your Story' writing contest from January – April and have recently posted all of the stories on the website. While none of the prize winning stories took place at USACE lakes, there were some really nice submissions from USACE projects. Here are a few examples from Table Rock, Hartwell, Texoma, and John H Kerr Reservoir.



### Table Rock Lake

<https://www.recreation.gov/shareyourstory/story/anniversary-2020/53e41205-a5f8-420e-8d4c-a3dd8ad89ede>

<https://www.recreation.gov/shareyourstory/story/annual-military-reunion/f96cd07d-ae73-451d-a38e-5c077a5c89e7>



### Hartwell Lake

<https://www.recreation.gov/shareyourstory/story/our-camping-adventure-on-lake-hartwell/35048317-de8c-4c81-a728-467cbf30a940>



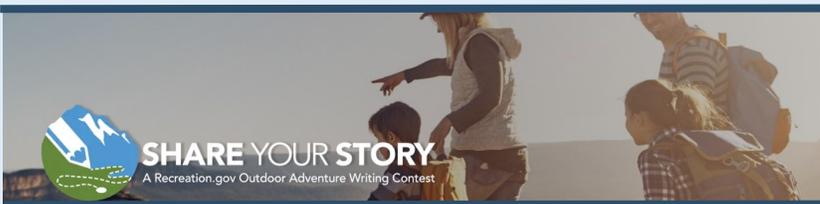
### Lake Texoma

<https://www.recreation.gov/shareyourstory/story/a-perfect-picnic-on-lake-texoma/9975aed4-75c3-4af0-b555-144b97bedcdd>



### John H. Kerr Lake

<https://www.recreation.gov/shareyourstory/story/what-a-blessing-nature-is-/ec67b400-2db8-491e-b1e1-e9df44e699dc>



To find out if any stories were submitted for your lake, just type in the name of your project in the search bar at: [https://](https://www.recreation.gov/shareyourstory/story-gallery)

[www.recreation.gov/shareyourstory/story-gallery](https://www.recreation.gov/shareyourstory/story-gallery). Feel free to link to these stories from your project webpages or social media sites to help share user experiences with others.

**2 Enduring Service Volunteer Award.** The Corps Foundation is now accepting applications for the "Enduring Service Volunteer Award." This is an annual award honoring long-term service and outstanding accomplishments by individual and families of volunteers at Corps lakes and waterways; and who have achieved results in such areas as conservation, education, recreation, safety and community engagement. The award is intended as a lifetime achievement award for exceptional volunteers who have made a positive difference in the lakes and waterways and the communities they serve **by volunteering for a period of 6 years or more.**

Additionally, these volunteer efforts should contribute to the advancement of:

- The mission: "The Corps Foundation engages the public to ensure the environmental health and recreational enjoyment of our nation's lakes, lands, and waterways administered by the US Army Corps of Engineers."
- Positive relationships between the Corps management, the visitors and the local community.
- Public knowledge of and involvement in the Corps natural resources management program.
- Partnerships and collaboration with other community organizations locally, regionally or nationally.

The application form, which is accepted each year between Sep. 15, 2021 and Dec. 30, 2021, can be found at <https://corpsfoundation.org/newsletter/>

Completed nomination forms may be submitted by email to Marilyn Jones at [jones\\_mk@yahoo.com](mailto:jones_mk@yahoo.com) or by mail to 1155 Old State Road, Covington, PA 16917-9576.

*Article continued from page 1.*

Mobile District, led by Allen Earhart, has charted the course in replacing energy-intensive staffed fee collection booths and "iron ranger" collection vaults with automated fee machines.

At Carters Lake, each automated machine has an estimated 1.7-year payback and has improved the mission by reducing fleet fuel usage, allowing greater customer access, and improving site resiliency where implemented. Carters Lake initially installed four solar and three hard-wired automated fee machines. At a cost of \$10,000 per machine, automated fee machines provided Carters Lake an estimated savings of \$6,000 in yearly costs from a combination of electricity, labor, and fuel reductions.

The automated machines provide more accurate customer data as well as the capability of serving customers 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week. The automated fee machines can be configured to match existing infrastructure including either hardwired or solar power supply options. The solar version is self-sustaining and is procured from the vendor with a 10-year warranty. In areas where electricity was not available, but there were clear views to the southeast, the solar machines were installed with the panels raised between 3-8 feet above the machine to deter damage. Hardwired fee machine maximum electricity draw is 2.5 amps, totaling less than 100 KWH/year, or less than 1 day of gatehouse operation. Additionally, 20-amp outlets on the machines allow heaters for machines which experience freezing conditions.

By the end of FY20, SAD had installed 75 machines, of which 36 were solar. All installed fee machines provide a secure, contact-free transaction permitting which allowed the continuation of recreation at many day use and campground facilities, even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since fee machines accept credit cards and many customers may not carry correct amounts of cash; initial data indicates user fees collected have increased since installation.

**Great job and thank you for sharing with us!**

# Recreation Leadership Advisory Team Update

Hello Recreation Community! My name is Chris Alford and I am the NWD representative and current Chair of the Recreation Leadership Advisory Team (RLAT). This team provides oversight and serves as an ad hoc committee to the Chief of the Natural Resources Management Branch in HQUSACE. The Team provides input to the strategic planning vision and makes recommendations on national priorities for the USACE Recreation Program. Each spring and fall, the RLAT meets in person along with the Stewardship Advisory Team (SAT). Due to COVID-19, the meeting was held virtually from Oct. 19 through Oct. 22, 2021. The meeting agenda was very full as we focused on items that required lengthy discussion and interactive conversation to develop paths forward. Here are some of the highlights:

- NRM Strategic Plan Goal Implementation: With the NRM Strategic Plan officially signed in July, the RLAT and SAT have established implementation teams for each goal. Work has been well underway in coordination with numerous active PDTs across USACE. More to come!
- During the RLAT portion of the meeting, the status of the Recreation S3 effort and the next steps for the program were discussed. Additional discussion were focused on the recreation program metrics, USACE Comment Cards, and the Recreation Task Force.
- During joint session portions of the meeting, topics include shoreline management, visitor center funding, NRM use of unmanned aerial systems, and impacts of transient populations on USACE lands and recreation areas.

The RLAT will meet again with the SAT in the spring. If you have questions for the RLAT, please feel free to reach out to me or to your division representative or MSC.

We also wish to recognize and THANK two members that have completed their terms with the team: Amy Cobb (SAD) and Brian Mangrum (LRD)!

The Division Representatives are:

- SAD - Amy Cobb (MSC TBD vice Ryan Hartwig)
- POD - Jill Davis & Justin Kerwin (MSC is Gayle Rich)
- MVD - Ashley Kiley (MSC is Lynn Neher)
- SPD - Alicia Kohl (MSC is Phil Smith)
- LRD - Brian Mangrum (MSC is Jeff Defosse)
- NAD - Tia Mercer (MSC is Mike Vissichelli)
- SWD - Amanda Palmer (MSC is David White)
- NWD - Chris Alford (MSC is Jonathan Carlisle)

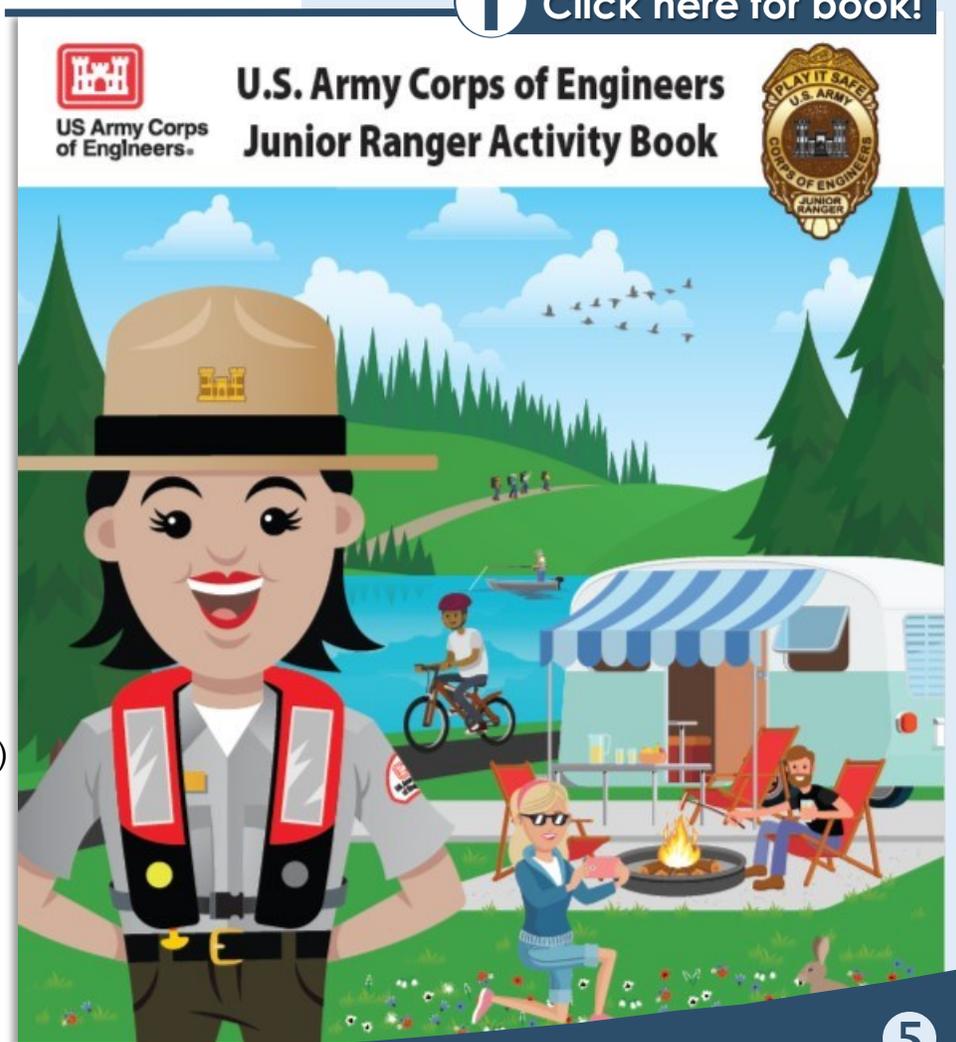
## Interpretive Corner

### **Have you seen the new USACE Junior Ranger Book?**

The USACE National Water Safety Program released the USACE Junior Ranger Book this past May. This interactive book contains not only water safety activities but many other activities regarding USACE, bicycle safety, trees, bald eagles, fish, invasive species, and more.

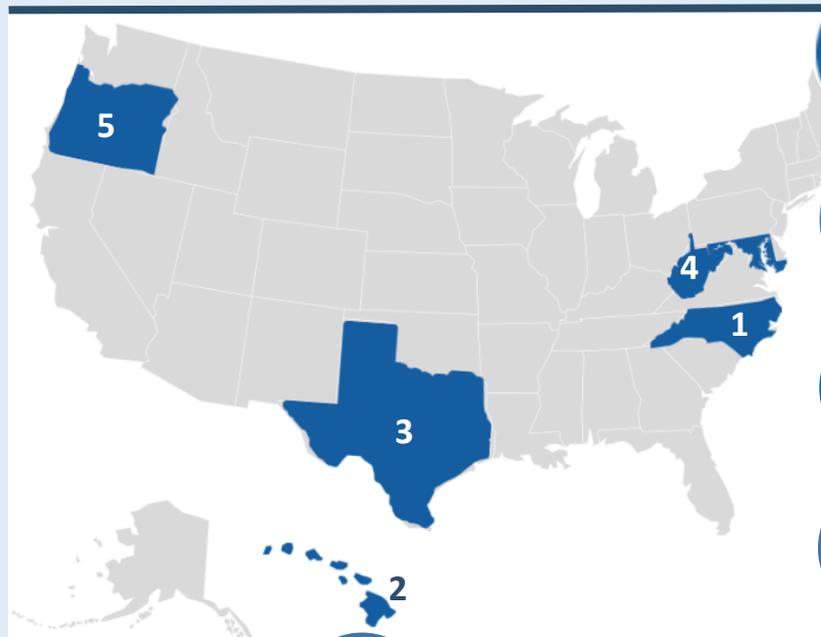
The book is only available electronically on the NRM Gateway at <https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/employees/watersafety/ranger.cfm>. From there, you can download and print it to use as is or add local information and activities. This doesn't replace any Junior Ranger Books that are being used at the district or project level. Also on the Gateway is artwork for the Junior Ranger plastic badge. This artwork can be customized to have your project's name on it.

 [Click here for book!](#)



# National Public Lands Day—Around USACE

On Sep. 25, 2021 the National Environmental Education Foundation hosted National Public Lands Day (NPLD). With precautions in place to ensure the safety of USACE employees, volunteers, and partners, many projects were able to host successful events to support public lands and waters. While just a few events are highlighted here, a BIG THANK YOU to all that contributed to a successful National Public Lands Day!



**4,000 +  
Volunteers**



**16,000 +  
Hours  
Served**



**\$455,000 +  
Service  
Value**



**Nearly 600  
Trees  
Planted**



**64 Events Across USACE**

(11 Events Cancelled/Impacted due to COVID Precautions or Weather Impacts)



**500 +  
Acres of Habitat  
Improved or Restored**



**60 Miles  
of Trails  
Maintained**

## 1 Falls Lake - Wilmington District

The Friends of the Mountains to Sea Trail (FMST) had 72 volunteers out to celebrate National Public Lands Day (NPLD). The volunteers split into two groups to tackle trail building and clearing at several sites along the 60 miles of trail that FMST maintains at Falls Lake. FMST and USACE collaborated in receiving a \$1,000 NEEF grant to support this event.



*FMST volunteers hard at work constructing a new section of trail along Panther Creek at Falls Lake.*



*Ranger Ferrell recognizes FMST Lead Volunteer Jeff Brewer as a finalist for the Corps Foundation's Enduring Service Award.*

## 2 Honolulu District

In recognition of National Public Lands Day, Park Rangers Jill Davis and Stephen Lawlor led the Honolulu District in the cleanup of Ft. DeRussy Beach Park and the surrounding area. With staggered start times and separated target areas to clean, a whopping 82 people were able to participate in the effort while keeping in line with the State and County COVID safety mandates.

**MAHALO for the success POH  
OHANA!**



*Groups received instructions and did their part in a successful cleanup event.*



# National Public Lands Day—Around USACE

## 3 Waco Lake - Ft. Worth District

Keep Waco Beautiful is in Lake Waco.  
September 25 at 4:24 PM · 🌐

In honor of national public lands day, we joined forces with [Texas Land Conservancy](#), [Fort Worth District](#), [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#) and [Group W Bench Litter Patrol](#) to clean up 3 different locations surrounding Waco Lake. We had a grand total of 48 volunteers, 15 community service members and 5 KWB board members collecting 83 bags, 3 tires, headboard, footboard and 2 signs!! Special thanks to [City of Waco - Public Information](#) for keeping our volunteers safe. #npld2021 #keepwacobeautiful #litterpicking #volunteering #cleanup



## 4 Jennings Randolph Lake - Baltimore District



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jennings Randolph Lake  
September 26 at 10:28 AM · 🌐

Established in 1994 and held annually on the fourth Saturday in September, National Public Lands Day is traditionally the nation's largest single-day volunteer effort. The Jennings Randolph Lake Project celebrated NPLD with the help of Keyser Boy Scout Troop 27 and camp host volunteers.

The scouts assisted in building five catfish spawning boxes that will be placed in the lake this spring. These boxes will provide a safe place for catfish to spawn and protect their eggs in their natural habitat. The Boy Scouts of America troops have been assisting the project since 2006 for NPLD events. We thank you for your dedication to helping us achieve our environmental stewardship goals and protecting our park's natural resources!

Images Above: Many events, such as those held at Waco Lake and Jennings Randolph Lake were shared through various social media platforms.

## 5 Willamette Valley Project - Portland District

A National Public Lands Day volunteer event was held at Pine Meadows Campground, Cottage Grove Lake. 8 USACE park rangers, 1 USACE botany tech, 4 USACE volunteers, and 35 community volunteers participated in the event. Volunteers planted 18 native trees and 75 native shrubs. The goals of the project were to add shade and visual barriers in the campground, improve aesthetic, and increase habitat for pollinators and wildlife. The value of service provided by the volunteers was about \$3995.



Photo Left: How to properly plant trees and shrubs was demonstrated by Park Ranger Alena Kimble for Boy Scout Troop 60. Photo Right: Park Ranger Jessica Corbett assisted a volunteer with his planting at the NPLD event. Photo Bottom: Group photo of the volunteers and rangers who planted native trees and shrubs.

